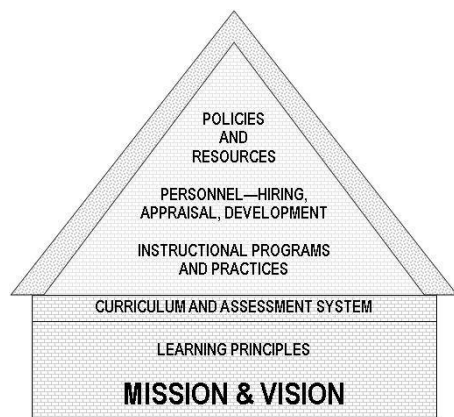


Candlewood Middle School

2011-2012



MISSION:

Our mission at Candlewood Middle School is to graduate students who exhibit their competence as critical thinkers, effective problem solvers, and creative individuals who use key content effectively. We will graduate learners who take responsibility and ownership of their learning, possess the ability to self-assess and make modifications, and consistently integrate 21st Century Skills into their work. We also expect that our graduates will successfully operate in a multi-cultural, socio-economically diverse society.

Specific student outcomes related to Mission: Students will:

- Effectively apply their learning in authentic situations where purpose, setting, and audience matter
- Assess how their work measures up to quality professional-level work
- Develop into thinkers who are both disciplined and imaginative when tackling a challenge
- Recognize that effort contributes a great deal to their academic success.
- Gradually take more responsibility for their learning
- Become increasingly aware of their academic strengths and weaknesses.
- Approach all problems with an open mind, a rich repertoire of problem-solving strategies, and persistence

Learning Beliefs: We believe that students learn best when they are:

- Asked to transfer their knowledge into worthy tasks and unique, creative situations
- Provided with regular, timely, and specific feedback
- Given opportunities to self-assess and set challenging goals for themselves
- Expected to produce quality work that meets high standards
- Given clear learning goals and examples of quality work
- Motivated and influenced by their emotional state, beliefs, interests and goals as well as habits of mind
- Engaged in individual, group, and class interactions
- Asked to use their prior knowledge to help construct new knowledge
- Made to understand that best effort is comprised of hard work and persistence
- Made to understand that novice learners need to acquire factual knowledge in tandem with conceptual understanding in order to be able to think effectively

Commitments: To accomplish our mission, we will as educators:

- Use best practice to enable learners to respond to 21st century challenges
- Establish clear expectations through the use of exemplars, models, and rubrics
- Balance direct instruction, meaning-making opportunities, and transfer activities into our instructional program
- Use the backwards design process to develop units and lesson plans
- Differentiate instruction as needed for all students
- Use pre, formative and summative assessments to assess students and inform instruction
- Provide feedback that is specific, timely, constructive and transferable
- Gradually release responsibility so students take greater ownership of their learning
- Employ all available technology resources to enrich learning
- Support character development and habits of mind
- Regularly communicate with families
- Apply the idea that effective learning requires not an exclusive focus on diligent drill and practice but rather a balanced approach on students' understanding and application of knowledge along with drill